

I QUIT!

Joe Slater

“So-and-so used to be a faithful member of the church, but a few years back (s)he quit.” Virtually every congregation could double in size if only those who have fallen away would repent and come back.

There is no valid excuse for quitting, but most of the excuses I’ve heard from former members pertain to other members who somehow offended them. No doubt some of the offenses are real, but others are purely imaginary. Even the real ones are usually blown out of all reasonable proportion.

In cases where someone has quit the church due to a genuine offense, at least two people need to repent. Certainly the one(s) who caused the occasion of stumbling must repent. *“It is impossible that no offenses [occasions of stumbling] should come, but woe to him through whom they come!”* (Luke 17:1). Our every word and deed has the potential either to help or to harm some soul. How careful we should be, lest our foolishness result in someone being eternally lost!

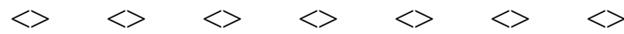
But the former church member who quit must also repent – yes, even if the offense was real – even if it was grievous and inexcusable. Two wrongs never make one right. God did not say, “Be faithful unless someone offends you, but then it’s ok to quit.” Service to God is based upon what He did for us, and our thankful devotion to Him. That doesn’t end when somebody rubs our fur the wrong way.

Jesus said, *“Be thou faithful unto death”* (Revelation 2:10, KJV). That doesn’t mean simply “until” death; it means even if faithfulness brings about death! Of all the excuses I’ve ever heard from former church members who quit, none claimed, “I quit because my life was in danger.” No, the excuses were far less

drastic. Since Jesus said to be faithful even if you will be killed for it, how can we think for one second that He will accept a flimsy excuse like, “I quit because they just didn’t treat me right,” or “I quit because Joe Churchmember is a hypocrite!”

What if Jesus had the attitude of some former church members? “Those Sadducees and elders are saying ugly things about Me. I am offended! I refuse to go to the cross for them – I quit!” or “The Pharisees are hypocrites. They make me sick – I quit!”

Thank God, Jesus didn’t quit! Jesus did the will of God the Father, regardless of what anyone else did, said, or thought. If we would be pleasing to Him, we must do the same.



Keeping Good Words

When good words are misused, we lose them; and often there is no substitute for the lost word. “Unique” is such a word. It doesn’t just mean unusual; it means the only one of its kind. A thing cannot be “more unique” or “the most unique.” Either it is unique or it is not. Help save a good word for which there is no substitute by curtailing its misuse.

“Lady” and “gentleman” are two other good words whose meanings are being lost. They are not just substitutes for “woman” or “female” and “man” or “male.” When a female college student is being dismissed for being in a male student’s bed late at night, let’s not say a “young lady” is being sent home. Nor do I think we would call the male student in that case a “young gentleman.”

Cecil May, Jr. (Faulkner University; via *Preacher Talk*)

WHEN THE MANNA CEASED

“Now the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land” (Joshua 5:12).

Imagine how they must have felt! All of their lives the manna had been lying on the ground when they rose in the morning, day in and day out, except for the Sabbath Day. Then it was gone, never to return.

We can imagine the apprehension, even some alarm, that morning at Gilgal. With their pots and jars in hand, they went forth to gather their daily bread, and lo, there was not a grain of manna to be seen. Perhaps they cried out to one another, “Where is it?” even as their fathers, upon seeing it for the first time, called out, “What is it?” Although they had now tasted the good grain of the promised land, we may be sure that they felt a void in the loss of the manna.

God always provides for His people, if not by ordinary means, then by the extraordinary. Those hundreds of thousands in the Sinai desert could not be fed with the scanty produce of the land, hence food and drink were supplied in extraordinary ways. However, upon reaching the “land of milk and honey,” their physical sustenance could be supplied by the ordinary or natural channels. This being the case, God withdrew the manna.

Yet man loathes giving up the extraordinary. The unusual powers conferred upon the apostles and their associates were one of those “times of refreshing” from the presence of the Lord. Those prophecies, healings, tongues, etc., were much more captivating to the superficial minds than the gospel of salvation which they left behind. To this day, some refuse to believe that the manna has ceased, even when the Lord bids them eat of the bread of truth and be satisfied.

Hershel Dyer (Tulsa, OK) via *Old Paths*